

First-Year Polish

Pierwszy rok języka polskiego
Prowizoryczne trzecie wydanie

Tom I: Lekcje 1-8

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INTRODUCTION

THE THIRD EDITION. *First-Year Polish* is a thoroughly rewritten and revised version of the book formerly bearing this title. The revision has been needed for some time, both because of changing life in Poland and because of the need for improvements in the book itself. Additionally, there was the need to adapt the textbook to developments in web and computer-based instructional technology. I hope that in attempting to correct some of the shortcomings of the original work I have not introduced too many new ones. This book is suitable for students with no previous knowledge of Polish or any foreign language. It is also appropriate for students with a certain knowledge of Polish from home or from living in Poland, or for students with a knowledge of a Slavic language other than Polish. While this book has been developed in constant contact with the beginning Polish classroom situation, it has been especially written with the distance-learner in mind, and users of the World Wide Web.

OVERVIEW. Orientation is almost exclusively conversational. A firm foundation in the spoken language is the best approach to later contact with the print-based language. Lessons are based on an initial presentation of important words, phrases, and topics in the form of brief, memorable dialogues, reflecting standard educated colloquial Polish. The conversational material is followed by short model sentences based on the conversations, by questions for written and oral practice, possibly by cultural notes, by grammatical commentary, and then by a set of exercises, suitable for both oral or written work.

Each lesson is based on one or more major grammatical topics, and is subdivided into five sub-lessons, each with its own grammatical commentary and exercises. In order to meet the needs and interest level of students already knowing a little Polish or another Slavic language, a fair amount of SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL has been presented following each lesson. This material is not incorporated organically into the lesson, but may be used as needed, or wholly omitted. In general, the instructor may feel free throughout this book to make decisions as to the importance of given topics in view of the specific needs of the student audience.

Among the supplementary material, on the last page of each lesson, is a "chapter" in a developing novelette. These READINGS introduce students to a different kind of vocabulary, phraseology, and stylistic register than are encountered in the conversations. They challenge the student by going

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slightly beyond the grammar of the lesson to which they are attached. I have found that these readings are often as useful for generating classroom conversations as are the conversations themselves.

A detailed OVERVIEW OF POLISH GRAMMAR is included at the end of the book. Students should read and reread this overview so as to form a reliable impression of the language and the topics that both have been, and are yet to be, covered. This overview goes somewhat beyond the grammar presented in the book, and can be used well into the intermediate and advanced levels of Polish language study.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CONVERSATIONS. This book is oriented around basic illustrative conversations, and is connected to a teaching methodology which emphasizes their thorough exegesis. The conversations are short and memorizable, and they are packed with phrases and constructions designed to initiate speech quickly. Most have a dramatic structure which makes them possible to learn quickly. For the most part, any role in any dialogue may be taken by a person of either sex, as long as appropriate changes are made in gender endings; and this, too, is a useful exercise.

Conversations are intentionally arranged as much around vocabulary and phraseology as they are around real-life situations, although careful attention has been made to cover a well-rounded array of situations too, as a glance at the topical index will testify. The virtue of the conversations lies in their potential for multi-faceted development. Students returning from in-Poland study programs using different materials tell me that they continue to hang on to and use the words and phrases learned here as if to a life raft.

In order to get the most out of the conversations, it is necessary to learn to exploit them in as many different ways as possible (what I am calling here 'exegesis'). Dialogues can be

- a. reduced to basic sentences.
- b. queried with questions of fact, aimed at extracting their content;
- c. queried with True/False/Maybe statements. Note that the best **tak/nie/może** statements are usually negative or probabilistic, for they allow one to explain why the statement is incorrect, or why it is probably right or wrong.
- d. retold in the third person, in either present imperfective or past perfective.
- e. embellished by making up additional details;
- f. derailed by interjecting a statement which causes the dialogue to veer off in a different direction from the one in the book;

g. dramatized, including with sock or paper-bag puppets.

h. turned into pattern-drill exercises.

Conversational exegesis of this sort practices a range of important language skills. Such activities do not have to take place between instructor and student only. Students themselves can be trained to assume the role of 'instructor' vis à vis another student for any given exercise, while the instructor walks from pair to pair to give assistance.

Here is an illustrative conversation, taken from Lesson 1, followed by various kinds of exegesis. Not all of these activities are appropriate for the lesson in which the conversation first occurs. One can always return to a well-known conversation from the past upon learning a new skill.

1.B. Dzień dobry!

Pan Karol: Dzień dobry pani!

Pani Maria: Dzień dobry panu! Jak się pan ma?

Pan Karol: Dobrze, dziękuję. A pani?

Pani Maria: Też dobrze. Co pan tu robi?

Pan Karol: Robię zakupy. Przepraszam, ale bardzo się śpieszę.

Pani Maria: Ja też muszę iść. To do widzenia.

Pan Karol: Do widzenia.

Sentences based on the conversation (listen, repeat, translate):

Bardzo się śpieszę.

Co pan(i) tu robi?

Do widzenia

Dobrze, dziękuję.

Dzień dobry pani!

Dzień dobry panu!

Ja też muszę iść.

Jak się pan(i) ma?

Przepraszam.

Robię zakupy.

Factual questions on the conversation (for both oral and written practice):

1. Jak się ma pan Karol? A jak się ma pani Maria?
2. Co robi pan Karol? A co robi pani Maria?
3. Kto się śpieszy? Kto robi zakupy?
4. Kto musi już iść?

True/False/Maybe Questions:

1. Pan Karol robi zakupy.
2. Pan Karol bardzo się śpieszy.
3. Pani Maria też robi zakupy.
4. Pan Karol musi już iść.

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Retelling in present tense:

Pan Karol i pani Maria spotykają się na ulicy i przywitają się. Pani Mari pyta, jak pan Karol się ma, a on odpowiada, że dobrze. Pani Maria mówi, że ona też dobrze się ma. Ona pyta, co pan Karol tam robi, a on odpowiada, że robi zakupy, i że bardzo się śpieszy. Pani Maria też musi iść, więc mówią sobie do widzenia.

Retelling in past perfective tense:

Pan Karol i pani spotkali się na ulicy i przywitani się. Pani Mari zapytała jak pan Karol się ma, a on odpowiedział, że dobrze. Pani Maria powiedziała, że ona też dobrze się ma. Ona zapytała, co pan Karol tam robi, a on odpowiedział, że robi zakupy, i że bardzo się śpieszy. Pani Maria też musiała iść, więc powiedzieli sobie do widzenia.

Embellishing:

Pani Maria i pan Karol znają się od dzieciństwa, bo uczyli się w tej samej klasie w szkole podstawowej i średniej. Pani Marii zawsze podobał się pan Karol, ale ona musiała go podziwiać z daleka, bo on nie odwzajemniał jej zainteresowania. Oni teraz mają własne rodziny. Nie mieszkają zbyt blisko siebie, więc rzadko się widują. Są w dobrych stosunkach, ale nie mają dużo wspólnych tematów do rozmowy kiedy się spotykają przypadkowo, jak teraz, na ulicy.

Derailing:

Pan Karol: Dzień dobry, pani Mario!

Pani Maria: Dzień dobry, panie Karolu! Jak się pan ma?

Pan Karol: Oj, okropnie pani Mario! Mam katar i głowa mnie boli.

Pani Mari: O, bardzo panu współczuję, panie Karolu! Ja też nie czuję się najlepiej. Był pan u lekarza?

Pan Karol: Byłem, ale on nie mógł mi nic poradzić. Powiedział, że mam odpocząć, ale sam to wiem.

Pani Maria: Wie pan co, dam panu numer mojego lekarza. On na pewno wypisze panu jakieś dobre lekarstwo.

Pan Karol: Dziękuję bardzo, pani Mario! Zadzwońię do niego jak tylko wrócę do domu.

Pattern Drills (a few examples)

Follow the models, using the cues provided.

1. on, ona: a. On zadzwoni do niej, jak ona tylko wróci do domu.
b. Ona zadzwoni do niego, jak on tylko wróci do domu.

Practices Genitive of pronouns after prepositions.

ona, on, my, wy; ja, pan; oni, pani.

2. adwokat: Byłeś (byłaś) u adwokata?

Practices Genitive of professional names.

lekarz, dentysta, fryzjer, fryzjerka, psychiatra.

3. adwokat: Dam panu (pani) numer mojego adwokata.

Practices Genitive of professional names.

lekarz, dentysta, fryzjer, fryzjerka, psychiatra, elektryk.

4. ja, pan: Bardzo panu współczuję.

Practices Dative of pronouns.

on, pani; my, państwo; my, jej; oni, wy.

5. Maria: Dzień dobry, pani Mario!

Practices Vocative of first names.

Karol, Zofia, Krystyna, Zenon, Paweł, Mariusz, Jurek, Ela.

On the subject of PATTERN-DRILLS, most of the exercises in the last part of each sub-lesson are of the pattern-drill (cue, response) variety. Such exercises are designed not to take up classroom time, but to develop facility in the use of forms outside class so that classroom time may be more profitably spent doing communicative exercises and meaningful conversation. With this aim in mind, most of the pattern drills have been computerized so that they are automatically correctable; see further below.

Exercises also include a set of short STATEMENT-RESPONSE SENTENCE PAIRS for translation from English to Polish. It seems to me that textbook authors who scrupulously avoid the use of "thinking in English" are fooling themselves. Students need to reinforce the command of foreign words, phrases, and constructions by constantly reminding themselves of their meanings. For a mono-lingual learner, the only way this can be done at first is to refer to the language that does have meaning, the native language. By so doing, one is not using English as English, but as a meta-language for referring to content. For almost everyone, the first stage of foreign-language use consists in developing ways to translate back and forth quickly between

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the foreign language and the native language. There is no way to speed up or short-circuit this natural process. Eventually, but only after much practice, the elements of the foreign language themselves begin to assert themselves and to take on independent meaning, and the learner begins to short-cut around English on his or her own.

APPROACH TO GRAMMAR. So-called communicative competence in Polish is, honestly speaking, fairly easily attained through conscientious application. The user of this book is more or less guaranteed the attainment of this level of Polish by carefully studying the dialogues, by doing the exercises (especially in their computerized versions), by listening to and repeating after the voice recordings, and by gaining command over the translations. The serious language student should aim beyond this, by having as a goal the ability to use Polish as a serious, reflective, educated person — among other things, with grammatical correctness. The approach followed in this textbook aims at eventually achieving this aim as well. In the long run students do not profit from or appreciate a watered-down, invisible-grammar approach. Students tend not to be trained linguists, and they have long since passed the age when they can easily and unconsciously intuit grammatical rules from exposure to raw language data. It is best to answer questions explicitly, helpfully, and in detail, even if at times technically. One needs to get control of the grammar sooner or later, so the sooner the better. The teacher needs to dot the i's of grammar, because otherwise the student will do this on his or her own, often incorrectly and after wasting much time, on the basis of his or her often erroneous native-language expectations.

ORDER OF PRESENTATION OF GRAMMATICAL TOPICS. A great deal of thought has been given to the matter of the correct presentational order of the grammar. I have made an assessment of the relative usefulness and importance of grammatical topics in colloquial Polish, together with an estimate of how easily and in what optimal sequence they can be learned by a speaker of English, and I have ordered their presentation accordingly. To the extent possible, noun topics alternate with verb topics. When an important topic logically suggests itself well before its formal introduction in the textbook (like the Locative or Dative cases or the plural of nouns), I do not hesitate to give a thumbnail sketch of the subject, for passive learning, by way of a preview. The instructor using this textbook will do well by not introducing topics out of order, but by having faith that, sooner or later, the topic will be covered in its own time.

There is no single best order in which the Polish cases should be presented. After many experiments with alternative orders as matched against communicative needs, I have decided that the best first Polish case to

learn after the Nominative is the Accusative (the direct-object case), and then the Instrumental. The Instrumental is the easiest to form of all the cases; it is needed for simple sentences of the sort **Jestem studentem** *I am a student*; and it has more varied uses than any other case: some syntactic, some semantic, others governed, and still others idiomatic. All in all, it is a good case on which to practice the whole idea of grammatical case in Polish. The Dative case is introduced first on the example of Dative-case pronouns, these having more colloquial functionality than the Dative case of nouns. The Genitive case is introduced next, because of its use in the expression of possession and amount, its importance in syntax as the case of negation, its use with quantifiers and numerals, and its importance in phrases of motion. Because the Locative case tends to be difficult to learn, even if easy to use once learned, I have taken the approach of introducing at an early stage a fairly large number of Locative-case phrases (**w Polsce** 'in Poland', **w bibliotece** 'in the library', **w domu** 'at home', **na uniwersytecie** 'at the university', etc.) to be memorized until the formal introduction of this case later on. In sum, the cases are introduced in the order Nominative, (Locative phrases), Accusative, Instrumental, Dative of pronouns, Locative, and Genitive. The Vocative is given in the grammatical supplement. In this supplement, the cases are presented in their traditional school-book order: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Instrumental, Locative, Vocative.

As far as verb conjugation and citation is concerned, after experimenting with a variety of methods, I have concluded that the best approach to verb description, the one requiring the fewest rules, is based on citing verbs in three forms: the infinitive, the 1st pers. sg., and the 2nd pers. sg. In case the 3rd pers. pl. is irregular, that form is cited as well. Verbs that occur only in the 3rd pers. sg. and pl. are cited in the infinitive and the 3rd pers. sg. Out of all the systems of verb citation I have used or encountered, this is one with which I feel most comfortable, because it promotes the learning of real forms over the memorization of rules of formal derivation.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Most of the photographs and illustrations in the book have been chosen after the book was written. Accordingly, they may have only loose association with the place in which they occur. Many of the photographs accompanying the lessons were taken in and around Łódź, Warsaw, and Kraków in the spring and summer of 2001, by Beata Ostojka and Jerzy Mazur, to both of whom I am extremely grateful. Some snapshots are the author's and, to an extent, reflect his fascination with Polish signs and storefronts. Some pictures have been taken off the internet. The postage stamps are regular issues dating from the past twenty or so years. The occasional archaic line drawings are taken from an early twentieth-century primer.

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CULTURAL ACCURACY. Students have returned from Poland reporting to me that the Polish they learned from *First Year Polish* was the same as that used on the streets of Warsaw, Łódź, Lublin, or Kraków. If so, I would say that the cultural-accuracy aspirations of that book were fulfilled. Nevertheless, emphasis in conversations is given to interpersonal situations which are largely transportable to any time and place. Imagining a highly individualized physical setting in Poland is not necessary, this being one of the reasons I think the first two editions of *First Year Polish* weathered time so well, and are equally well suited to approaching Polish and Poland today as twenty years ago, in a radically different socio-political environment. Obviously, realia change over time in any country, and one cannot help but use items in a textbook which are going to be out of date in a decade or so. Since 1978 in Poland, the word for *policeman* has changed from **milicjant** to **policjant**. Some younger people in Poland no longer know very well what an **adapter record-player** is; and the word **prywatka party**, which is what I once learned for 'party', now sounds quaint alongside **impreza**. After having joined the European Union on May 1 of 2004, one may expect that sooner or later the monetary unit will become the **euro** instead of the **złoty**. The prices of food items quoted in the 1978 edition of this book first became inaccurate by a factor of a thousand or more, but later, because of revaluation, once again fell more or less in line with reality. It is impossible to predict where they will be by the time this book reaches the shelves.

All conversations and accompanying questions have been read for grammatical and cultural accuracy by Jolanta Łapot, a visiting Kościuszko Foundation scholar in Pittsburgh during the years 1999-2002, and by Maria Śledzińska of Bydgoszcz, who also cast her linguistic, stylistic, and cultural judgments on the entire book. Elżbieta Ostrowska, a Kościuszko Foundation scholar in 2002-2003, read and commented on several lessons, as did Lisa di Bartolomeo, who taught from preliminary versions of this book in intensive summer courses in 2002-2004. Recordings were made by and with the help of Łukasz Prendke and Jakub Wickiewicz of Poznań. Any remaining mistakes are the author's sole responsibility.

IN CONCLUSION. My main hope is that the current edition will constitute a step forward for the serious learner of Polish, and that this book will serve its users for years to come as a springboard into contemporary Polish language and culture.

OSCAR E. SWAN
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH 2005

WEB-BASED ICONS

This textbook is supported by a dedicated website, the URL (web address) for which is <http://polish.slavic.pitt.edu/firstyear>. This website supports only the newest Windows and Macintosh systems, and either wireless or, better yet, fast cable connections. The user should choose Lessons and, from this, the specific lesson needed, 1-12. The lessons are in pdf format, which means that one's computer needs to have Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to read them.



AUDIO RECORDINGS relating to material in the book, whether conversations, sentences, questions, or pattern-drill exercises, are highlighted by the phonograph icon. Clicking the phonograph icon or the space to its left will bring up the relevant sound file.



By clicking the FEMALE OR MALE ICON, or the space to the right of the female icon or the left of the male icon, one receives either a female or a male reader for the sentences based on the conversation. The female speaker uses feminine 1st-person forms, and speaks as if to a male interlocutor, and the male speaker will use masculine 1st-person forms, and speaks as if to a female.



MOVIES. Clicking the movie camera will cause the above conversation to "come to life" in a staged film version. The movie can also be started by clicking in the picture above the conversation. Not all camera icons are active as of the present moment, since the "movies" are still being produced.



COMPUTER-CORRECTED EXERCISES are tied to all conversations and question-sets, and to most exercises. Their trade name is "Lektorek," the diminutive of the Polish word for language tutor, and it has been developed specifically for this textbook. The computer drills may be printed out with correct responses indicated, comprising an answer key to most of the book's exercises. They have many other features, which are described under Help in Lektorek.

One needs the Java Virtual Machine, or JVM, (a free download) to run Lektorek. Depending on the computer system being used, clicking the

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computer icon will or will not start Lektorek by itself. Most users will download Lektorek permanently to the hard drive and use it independently. Here are the steps required:

- a. From <http://polish.slavic.pitt.edu/firstyear>, choose Computer Drills.
- b. Download and unzip Lektorek.zip. Put the resulting Lektorek.jar in a new folder, called Lektorek.
- c. Download the desired drills (for example, FYPDrills1-6.zip, which contains the drills for Lessons 1-6) by clicking them. You should not unzip them. Even if a Macintosh does this automatically, still use the unzipped version). Put the drills into the Lektorek folder.
- d. Under Options, set the first option by browsing for the file Lektorek. Once this option is set, you do not have to do this again.
- e. Start Lektorek by clicking Lektorek.jar. Load the desired drill under File (at the upper left of the screen).

Although instructions are available under Help, most find the computer drills to be self-explanatory. The Polish letters are obtained at Control+Key positions. For example, hooked a (**ą**) is located at Control+a, barred l (**ł**) is at Control+l, and so on. Dotted z (**ż**) is located at Control+x.



RETURN TO DIRECTORY. Clicking the stamp emblem at the beginning of any lesson will return you to the Table of Contents, from which another lesson may be chosen by clicking in the space of the lesson. Once in a lesson, you may go to a desired conversation by clicking in the line of the conversation on the first page of each lesson. You may also navigate in a lesson by using Bookmarks in the Adobe Reader.